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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 007398

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [EAID](#) [SNAR](#) [KPKO](#) [TU](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/AFGHANISTAN UPDATE: KARZAI TO VISIT, ITALY  
JOINS TURKISH AND FRENCH COMMAND OF CAPITAL REGION, TURKISH  
PRT STILL POSSIBLE (THOUGH NOT LIKELY)

REF: ANKARA 6323

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request -- please see para. 6.

Summary

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[1](#)2. (C) President Karzai will visit Turkey Jan. 5-6. Italy is joining Turkey and France's proposed co-command of ISAF's Capital Region Command; Turkey felt it could not refuse Italy's offer. Turkey may/may be prepared to consider a PRT if one is proposed to it by the USG or the GOA. End summary.

Karzai to Ankara

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[1](#)3. (C) On Dec. 15, we called on MFA Head of Department for South Asia Murat Ulku for an update on Turkish security assistance for Afghanistan. Ulku reported that President Karzai will pay the first visit by an Afghan head of state to Turkey in at least 40 years this Jan. 5-6. (NOTE: Ulku stressed that this has not yet been publicly announced--please protect accordingly. END NOTE.) Karzai will meet with President Sezer and PM Erdogan; Ulku noted that PM Erdogan remains personally committed to the future of Afghanistan.

ISAF Capital Region Command: Three's Company

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[1](#)4. (C) Ulku reported that now the Italians will likely join Turkey and France in the proposed co-commanding of ISAF's Capital Regional Command (CRC) beginning in Aug. 2006. Ulku recalled that Turkey had initially planned to command this mission alone, but first France and -- quite recently -- Italy have both asked to join. He noted that -- given Italy's strong support for Turkey's EU bid -- Ankara felt it could not turn down Rome's offer. Ulku said that preliminary planning calls for the three countries to rotate the commander, deputy commander, and chief of staff positions on an annual basis. The CRC's first commander will be French.

Turkish PRT?: Maybe

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[1](#)5. (C) Ulku noted that he had recently attended a NATO meeting on Afghanistan in Brussels, and that he personally felt "left out" when the discussion turned to PRTs. He offered that while he and some others in the Ministry favor Turkey leading a PRT, many senior leaders in the Ministry are still quite leery of the idea. (NOTE: In 2004 and 2005, separate abortive attempts by Turkey to take a PRT ended badly, and many senior MFA officials felt that Allies -- including the U.S. -- had not dealt with Turkey fairly. END NOTE.) However, Ulku went on, a direct, clear offer "from the U.S. side or from Karzai himself" to command a particular PRT might convince his leadership to reconsider.

[1](#)6. (C) COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST: Turkey's insistence on commanding a PRT in the north -- as well as mixed signals in the past from the USG, other Allies, and the Afghans themselves -- have so far conspired to prevent Turkey from undertaking this tangible contribution to Afghan peace and security. Ulku did not signal that Turkey was ready to take on a southern PRT, but hinted that Turkey may/may be willing to consider a non-northern PRT. However, Ulku made it clear that Turkey will not consider taking on a specific PRT absent a direct, unambiguous request from Karzai and/or the United States. Thus we request Washington and Kabul consider whether there is a PRT we would like Turkey to consider taking on. If so, the Karzai visit may be an opportunity to move this forward. END COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST.

WILSON